

REMARKS

The Office Action of July 23, 2002, has been carefully considered.

It is noted that claims 14 and 23 are rejected under 35 USC 112, second paragraph.

Claim 14 is rejected under 35 USC 102(b) over the patent to Okada, et al.

Claims 12 and 13 are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) over German reference DE-92 18 985 in view of Okada, et al.

Claims 14-16 are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) over Okada, et al. in view of XP-002128554.

Claims 17-20, 23 and 24 are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) over Okada, et al. and XP-002128554, and further in view of the patent to Vogt.

Claims 21 and 22 are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) over Okada, et al., XP-002128554 and Vogt, and further in view of the patent to Honda.

In view of the Examiner's rejections of the claims applicant has cancelled claims 15, 16 and 21, and amended claims 12, 14, 17, 22 and 23.

It is respectfully submitted that the claims now on file particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Applicant has amended the claims to address the instances of indefiniteness cited by the Examiner.

In view of these considerations it is respectfully submitted that the rejection of claims 14 and 23 under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, is overcome and should be withdrawn.

It is respectfully submitted that the claims now on file differ essentially and in an unobvious, highly advantageous manner from the methods and constructions disclosed in the references.

Turning now to the references, and particularly to the patent to Okada, et al. it can be seen that this patent discloses a method of and apparatus for producing a multilayer ceramic board. Okada, et al. do not disclose an apparatus for producing a sized, card-shape information carrier which has the features recited in amended claim 14 now on file. Specifically, Okada, et al. do not disclose heating plates or a frame having a reduction in material in a transition edge region in order to increase specific contact pressure between a frame border edge and the upper heating plate, as in the presently claimed invention.

In view of these considerations it is respectfully submitted that the rejection of claim 14 under 35 USC 102(b) over the above-discussed reference is overcome and should be withdrawn.

German reference 92 18 985 discloses a laminator for producing a card. The Examiner combined the teachings of Okada, et al. with the German reference in determining that claims 12 and 13 are unpatentable over such a combination. The Examiner argues that the element 4 of Okada, et al. covers the peripheral narrow outer boundary of the inserted template. This element 4 is a restraining mold which is movable with the pressure inducing movement of the upper mold 2. Thus, no frictional force results between the peripheral edge portion of the sheets 1 and the inner wall surface of the restraining mold 4 (see column 3, lines 47-49 of Okada, et al.). There is absolutely no teaching or suggestion to be found in Okada, et al. that the restraining mold 4 is configured or provided so as to reflect back heat. Okada, et al. nowhere acknowledge or recognize that there is a problem or could be a problem caused by losing heat in

the edge region during lamination. Such an acknowledgement is only found in the teachings of the present application. Thus, applicant respectfully submits there is nothing in the teachings of either of the references which would motivate those skilled in the art to enclose a peripheral, narrow, outer boundary region of the inserted template so that quantities of heat flowing off are retained, blocked in, reflected and concentrated back into the template. Without some acknowledgement of the problems associated with heat loss in the edge regions during lamination it is respectfully submitted that there is nothing provided in the teachings of these references which would suggest the combination thereof as argued by the Examiner. Any such combination would at best only be possible by impermissible hindsight reconstruction of the invention based upon the teachings provided in the present application.

In view of these considerations it is respectfully submitted that the rejection of claims 12 and 13 under 35 USC 103(a) over a combination of the above-discussed references is overcome and should be withdrawn.

Reference XP 002128554 discloses a laminate board in which thermally insulated plates are attached to the edges of the heating plates in order to reduce the flow of heat from the edges of the heating plate and heat dispersion in the board. The Examiner combined the teachings of this reference with Okada, et al. in determining that claims 14-16 would be unpatentable over such a combination. This combination of references does not teach the features recited in independent claim 14 presently on file. Specifically, there is no teaching or suggestion by the combination of a frame having a reduction in material in a transitional edge region in order to increase specific context pressure between a frame border edge and the upper heating plate, as in the presently claimed invention.

In view of these considerations it is respectfully submitted that the rejection of claims 14-16 under 35 USC 103(a) is overcome and should be withdrawn.

The patent to Vogt discloses a method and device for laminating layers of identification cards and the patent to Honda discloses a method of bonding veneer sheets. These references have been carefully considered. Applicant respectfully submits that neither of these references provides any additional teaching which when taken in combination with Okada, et al. and XP 002128554 would suggest the invention recited in the claims presently on file. There is no suggestion in any of the references for combining the teachings of these references to arrive at the unique combination of features recited in independent claim 14 presently on file.


In view of these considerations it is respectfully submitted that the rejections of claims 17-24 under 35 USC 103(a) are overcome and should be withdrawn.

Reconsideration and allowance of the present application are respectfully requested.

It is believed that no fees or charges are required at this time in connection with the present application; however, if any fees or charges are required at this time, they may be charged to our Patent and Trademark Office Deposit Account No. 03-2412.

Respectfully submitted,

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In the Claims:

12. (Amended) A method for producing a card-shaped information carrier, comprising the steps of: placing at least one card template which is to be sized into a hollow mold; [and] subjecting the template to a simultaneous action of pressure and heat for a predetermined time so that the template placed into the hollow mold is heated over at least one large area by heating plates[,]; and [in] enclosing a peripheral, narrow, outer boundary region of the inserted template so that quantities of heat flowing off per se there are retained, blocked in, reflected and concentrated back onto the template.

14. (Amended) An apparatus for producing a sized, card-shaped information carrier comprising a frame defining a cavity in which card layers are placeable for lamination by pressure and heat, a peripheral region of the frame consisting of a material which is one of [at most only slightly heat-conducting] substantially non-heat-conducting, reflects heat and concentrates heat back onto an inserted laminate, the frame having internal dimensions that correspond to final dimensions of the card-shaped carrier, and further comprising heating plates arranged on both sides of the frame forming, by its internal dimensions, the cavity for the laminating process, the heating plates including an upper heating plate and a lower heating plate, the frame having a reduction in material in a transitional edge region in order to increase specific contact pressure between frame border edge and the upper heating plate, one of the heating plates having external dimensions that correspond to the internal dimensions of the frame and being insertable with a prestressing action into said frame so as to produce the pressure required for laminating.

17. (Amended) An apparatus as defined in claim 16, wherein [the heating plates include an upper heating plate and a lower heating plate,] the lower heating plate [having] has the external dimensions that correspond to the internal dimensions of the frame, and further comprising a cooling body adjacent to the lower heating plate so that the cooling body is insertable together with the lower heating plate into the frame.

22. (Amended) An apparatus as defined in claim [2] 14, wherein the reduction in material is formed by a peripheral, outer annular recess in the frame.

23. (Amended) An apparatus as defined in claim 19, and further comprising dedicated prestressing means for pressing a transitional boundary edge of the frame [by its transitional boundary edge] against the boundary lip of the upper heating plate.